

# Hurricane Preparedness Tips – Businesses

The following steps should be taken to prepare an office or other commercial type of building prior to the arrival of a hurricane.

- ▶ Evacuation from the eastern or oceanside of the Intracoastal Waterway is mandatory for any category of hurricane.
- ▶ Cover all glass windows and doors on at least the first floor, with shutters, paneling or other protective material such as plywood or masonite.
- ▶ Safeguard company records or make duplicates, and secure in a bank. Move important documents away from windows. Those on the first floor should be placed on tables or otherwise raised off the floor in the event the first floor becomes flooded by either increased tidal action or excessive rainfall. Use of large plastic bags will help protect items from water damage. It is advisable to have a supply of heavy sheeting, air conditioning duct tape and some sandbags set aside for securing first floor doorways against flood water.
- ▶ Take before and after pictures of business/plant to aid insurance or tax credit claims after storm.
- ▶ If closing the business/plant during the emergency:
  - advise local law enforcement if the business will be empty of people or if security guards will be on site. If guards are to remain on site, their safety should be provided for. They should have adequate shelter, communications, food and water.
  - shut down all incoming power, electric, gas and water lines. Before restoring service, check all utilities. If there is a question about the condition of the utilities, call the appropriate company.
- ▶ Disconnect all electrical appliances and equipment, such as typewriters, copiers, coffee makers, electric clocks, calculators, etc., to prevent their being damaged due to blown transformers or excessive surge when electric power is restored.
- ▶ Secure all vent hoods, exhaust louvers, etc., from wind and rain.
- ▶ Service and test the building's emergency power generator under load to make sure it is operating. Check out all equipment, utilities, fire equipment and first aid materials and repair or replace faulty items as necessary.
- ▶ Check drains on the roof of the building to ensure that they are clear and able to drain off the heavy rain which usually accompanies a hurricane. Clogged roof drains could cause the roof to collapse from weight of accumulated water, or cause damage to the interior of the building if water on the roof becomes deep enough to cover vent pipes and run down inside the building.
- ▶ Secure or bring inside any potted plants or other decorative objects which could be blown about by the hurricane force winds.
- ▶ Check storage yard for materials that might be blown around. Secure items that cannot be brought inside.
- ▶ Dumpsters (large trash containers) can be secured by lashing two or more together with rope or chains and chocking the wheels. They might also be secured to a tree or telephone pole, if available.
- ▶ Relocate empty railroad cars, if possible.

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